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OCHAMPUS MANUAL 6010.47-M

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CHAMPUS POLICY MANUAL

VOLUME THREE
(Case Applications)

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CHAMPUS

OFFICE OF THE CIVILIAN HEALTH AND MEDICAL
PROGRAM OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES

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October 1982

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Subject: Denial of Frankel Appliance

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Approval: [signature] Date: APR 19 1983

ISSUE

The rationale for denial of benefits for a Frankel appliance used in the treatment of a congenital anomaly when benefits are payable for surgical correction of the same anomaly.

FACTS

This is an 11-year old child who has been a patient in the Oral and Communicative Disorder Program at the University of North Carolina. The child has hemifacial microsomia which is a congential craniofacial defect involving unilateral facial nerve paralysis; microtia of the external ear, left ear deafness and right ear hearing loss; a significant speech defect and jaw asymmetry. In order to attempt required correction of the jaw deformity, a Frankel appliance was recommended to stimulate mandibular growth, obviating the need for surgical correction.

On October 22, 1982, benefits were denied for the Frankel dental appliance on the basis that a written request for dental benefits had not been submitted and received by the fiscal intermediary (FI) who handles dental claims. Since a timely request had not been filed, the FI was correct in denying benefits. However, the Policy Branch was requested to clarify CHAMPUS' position on the Frankel appliance.

AUTHORITY

Under CHAMPUS Regulation DoD 6010.8-R, Chapter IV, Section E.10.b.(5) (page 53 of 73) all orthodontia is specifically excluded except when a necessary adjunct to surgical correction of a congenital cleft palate. Chapter IV, Section E.8.a.(1), however, does provide coverage for cosmetic, reconstructive and/or plastic surgery for correction of congenital anomalies.

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'Subject: Denial of Frankel Appliance

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INTERPRETATION

Orthodontia deals with the development, prevention and correction of irregularities of the teeth and malocclusion, and with associated facial abnormalities. Since the Frankel dental appliance falls within the above category and is not adjunctive to surgical correction of a congenital cleft palate it must be denied as a benefit under CHAMPUS. This position is further substantiated in OCHAMPUS Interpretation 22-78-I in which benefits were denied for orthodontia related to the treatment of scoliosis.

CHAMPUS Regulation does provide coverage for cosmetic, reconstructive and/or plastic surgery for correction of congenital anomalies. Since the child is suffering from a mandibular deformity secondary to hamifacial microsomia, a congenital anomaly, benefits for otherwise covered services and supplies may be provided for reconstructive surgery if preauthorization is obtained. This surgery would be part of the treatment required for reconstruction of a congenital craniofacial anomaly.

The rationale for denial of this treatment is based solely upon strict interpretation of the CHAMPUS Regulation, which specifically excludes all orthodontia except in connection with the surgical correction of a congenital cleft palate.

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